

GLE 63
CAMERON

WRITINGS

NICARAGUA - SOMOS HERMANAS, [1986]

[12 pages]

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The 2nd delegation of SOMOS Hermanas spent almost two weeks on tour of Western Nicaragua, our sponsor group was AMMLAE which is Nicaragua's women's organisation and movement. For some of us it was ~~our~~ ^{their} first visit outside of the U.S. and for others on the delegation it was their second visit to Nicaragua since the revolution.

Because SOMOS HERMANAS is a women's organization, we went to Nicaragua to express our solidarity with the women of Nicaragua and to also indicate that the non-intervention ~~movement~~ movement in the United States has a women's voice

and that these women are of many races,
lesbian and straight.

The population of Nicaragua is 3 million, 50%
of the population is under the age of 15,
62% are women.

We met with women in the government,
women in the military, women in
factories, women in agricultural cooperatives.
In Nicaragua women make up 75% of the
popular militias, 80% of the neighborhood
civil defense units, 85% of the health
brigadistas and 45% of those leading
adult education. Women also make
up 50% of union members, and

70% of university. And not surprising many of the people we met in leadership or in positions of responsibility were young in comparison with other world leaders.

But regardless of who we spoke with or met with, the message was the same, that they will die fighting a U.S. intervention and that it's the people of U.S. who can stop the intervention.

Even when we met the Mothers of the Heroes and Martyrs, their

determination and belief in Nicaragua was very clear despite

the fact ~~that~~ that they have lost their children to Somoza and now to Reagan, often brutally. ~~the~~

One of the main areas of suffering is the health of the general population, particularly women. There are not

enough medical supplies even for the most basic needs. Until recently the medical care has been free but the health care providers will be charging 10 cordobas to help cover the costs.

10 cordobas, which is extremely low cost

but if the peasants can't afford of course it will be free.

Perhaps the only positive aspect to the shortage of medical supplies is that there is a movement to ^{begin} using natural remedies, using the herbs and roots indigenous to Nicaragua.

But of course, under the low intensity

warfare, all of the population is suffering.

One of the Departments we visited was the office of Combatants - this department deals with the MOBILISED, who are soldiers between the ages of 17 and 25 who are placed at the front, the Reserved, the Sandinista popular militia, the sick

and wounded combatants, the disabled,
those removed from service, those families
who have had ~~these~~ children still ~~the~~ ~~depend~~
we been killed. ^{while in service} ~~They~~ The office of
combatants also sets up medical care ~~for~~ ^{outside of N/ZA} for
the wounded who need specialized medical care.
They also find employment and education
for the de-mobilized.

And with the mobilization of men into
war, the productive lives of the
women has increased dramatically.

There are women combatants, most
of the women militia have been

in the Sandinista youth. There are women only battalions and women only artillery units.

We visited a textile factory just outside of MANAGUA. The products of this factory are uniforms for the combatants. Impressively

the factory has a 24 hour on site child care center. Most significant was

that the Union leader who made the presentation at the factory and gave us historical background was Bernicia Sanders who is Miskito Indian. There are very

few Indian people in leadership positions within the FSLN

or within the general governance of Nicaraguan affairs. But she was very much dedicated to the revolution and to The Nicaraguan government. She believes by setting ~~this~~^a kind of example she will further the cause of the Indian people.

We did receive a thorough presentation on the Atlantic coast and thus the ~~autonomous~~ autonomy. ~~it is~~ The ~~Atlantic~~

The history of the Atlantic coast is complex and controversial because it

is in a way gone. And I
as a Native American felt

assured that the Nicaraguan government is sincerely working toward a just solution to the sovereignty of the Indian people on the Atlantic coast. ~~Several~~ ~~thousands~~ Thousands of Indian people have been kidnapped and taken across into ~~the~~ Honduras by the somacistas and then it's portrayed by the U.S. media that Indian people have fled Nicaragua because the Sardinistas have mistreated them. There ~~but if the negotiations were continued,~~ is much work to be done in the area because as a region it's always been

isolated from the rest of the country.

We learned and observed sobering facts about how U.S. aggression has hurt the people of Nicaragua but we also got to enjoy some of the recreational facilities that are available to the people. For example on the Sunday we were there, our tour guides took us to the Beach for the day. Of course it rained the entire time we were at the beach but we sat in the cafes along the beach drinking and eating as the rest of the people. This particular recreation

area had been formerly for the
exclusive use by Somoza and his
people. Now it's open to the public.

~~that those who had been to Nicaragua~~
~~know that~~ the Nicaraguan

people are friendly receptive to Americans.

And that the Nicaraguan people
know that there is the Nicaraguan
government of the U.S. and then
there are the people and the
people of Nicaragua have faith in us.

We left Managua on Oct 4th,

and Oct 5th is when Hasenfus
was captured so we missed

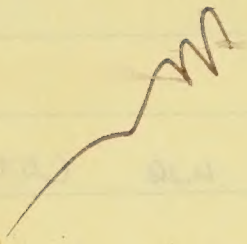
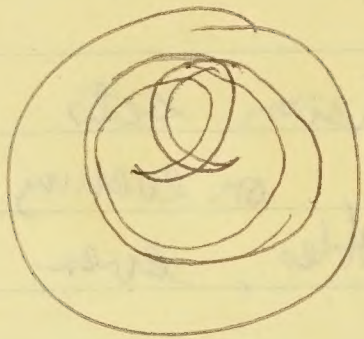
that excitement.

During the war on Vietnam, we could
turn on our television sets and catch
the latest ~~fight~~ ^{on evening news} battles, even see the
wounded and the dead.

^{today}
We turn on our television sets and there
the news reports, until Contra gate, about
Nicaragua have been scenes of some
food lines in Nicaragua with the
reporter stating that the reason the
people are suffering in Nicaragua is
because democracy never had a chance.

There is no analysis that the

Nicaraguan people are suffering because
of government.



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